

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Celebrating National Nurses Week: Durham VA Nurse LaDonna Thomas named NCNA Triangle Region's 2019 Nurse of the Year**

**DURHAM, N.C.** — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the nation's largest single employer of nurses, joins the American Nurses Association (ANA) in honoring America's nurses dedicated to saving lives and maintaining the health of millions of individuals, including our nation's heroes, during National Nurses Week, May 6-12, 2019. This year's National Nursing week theme "4 million reasons to celebrate", is a nod to the over 4 million nurses in the United States, making it the largest health professional group in the nation. VA honors the contributions of its nurses to the VA health care system, both in the role they play as clinicians and as leaders who can significantly influence the quality of Veterans' care. VA health care facilities throughout the country will pay tribute to the more than 100,000 nurses who Durham VA Health Care System Director Paul Crews describes "as the compassionate backbone of VA's world-class health care system."

Annually, National Nurses Week begins on May 6, marked as Nurse Recognition Day, and ends on May 12, the birthday of Florence Nightingale, founder of nursing as a modern profession. During this week, **nurses at DVAHCS will be honored with a DVAHCS Nurses Appreciation Service at 9 a.m., Wednesday, May 8, 2019., at the Durham VA Medical Center, 508 Fulton St, Durham 27705.**

**The North Carolina Nurses Association Triangle Region recently named DVAHCS' Nurse LaDonna Thomas as their 2019 Nurse of the Year.** Dr. Thomas has been with the Department of Veterans Affairs since August 2001. She currently serves as the medical center's Facility Lead Nurse Practitioner, but previously worked as a Nurse Practitioner in the Compensation and Pension Clinic and in Care in the Community. She has served on numerous Medical Center committees and has been the Chairperson of the Advance Practice Nurse Practitioner (APRN) Committee in 2010 and 2013-2014.3. Dr. Thomas received her undergraduate degree, a BS in Biology in 1997 from North Carolina A&T State University, her BSN in 2001 from North Carolina Central University, her MSN from UNC-Greensboro in 2009 and her Doctorate in 2015 from Chatham University. She is also a Duke-Johnson & Johnson Nursing Fellow, 2014 Inaugural Cohort.

National Nurses Week is devoted to highlighting the diverse ways in which registered nurses, the largest health care profession, work to improve health care. From bedside nursing in hospitals and long-term care facilities to the halls of research institutions, state legislatures, and Congress, the depth and breadth of the nursing profession is meeting the expanding health care needs of American society and its Veterans.

For more about VA nurses visit <http://www.va.gov/nursing/>.

**For more information please contact Yves-Marie Daley, Public Affairs Specialist, at 919-370-0040 (cell)**